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GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL NOTES

OF THE

BOWLES FAMILY.

BY SAMUEL BOWLES, OF SPRINGFIELD.

JANUARY 1, 1851.*

ACCORDING to "Burke's Landed Gentry," and his "General Armory," (English books of undoubted authority,) our English ancestors, who were of the same stock or family, spelt their names *Bowles* or *Bolles*; sometimes one way, and sometimes the other. Mention is made of the family residing in the towns of Swineshead and Hough, in the county of Lincoln, as early as 1477, one of whom was Sheriff of the County, in the 16th year of Edward IV. Oldfield Bowles, of North Aston, in the county of Oxford, married first in 1768, Gertrude, daughter of Sir Richard Bamfylde. His second wife was daughter of Sir Abraham Elton, Bart. of Clevedon Court, Somerset, by whom he had eight daughters and one son, Charles Oldfield Bowles, of North Aston.

The escutcheon, or coat-of-arms of the family, is thus described in English armorial books: "*Arms*, azure (or blue) out of three cups or bowls—as many boars' heads. *Crest*, a demi-boar wounded in the breast with a broken spear." The three bowls are supposed to indicate the family name—the boars' heads to indicate courage. The armorial of the Bowles or Bolles family of Lincoln County, in England, is the same.

* The first issue of this pamphlet was incomplete and incorrect in some of its details, and I have revised it. This is a corrected copy. I desire that those of the first issue may be destroyed.

Bowles
Bowles

J. W. Thornton, Esq., of Boston, who married a grand-daughter of Capt. Ralph Hart Bowles, has procured a book from England, exclusively devoted to the Bowles family, of Lincoln County, in which biographical and genealogical sketches are given, from a very early date. Mention is made therein of several of the name, who were Sir Knights and Baronets; of others, who were eminently pious men. It contains several portraits, in the costume of the times. In this book, the escutcheon of the family corresponds with that above named.

The *Bolles* family of Connecticut trace back to Thomas Bolles, who it appears, was born in England, June 25, 1643. Another account says Thomas Bolles was born in Wells, Maine, in 1642. The first statement is probably correct. The latter probably was intended to refer to his arrival or settlement at Wells: but with an error in the figures. From the fact that he was soon invited to New London, Conn., by Governor Winthrop, of that State, it is presumed that he was known to that gentleman before or at the time of his emigration. He settled in New London, and there married. He lived on the hill now known as "Bolles's hill," just north of the city. It is stated that he died in New London in 1728. On the 4th of April, 1678, while absent on official business, as a Magistrate, a villain named Stoddard came to his house and murdered his wife and two children! The murderer placed the body of Mrs. Bolles on a flat rock near the front door, and John, the only surviving child, aged nine months, at the breast of his dead mother! Thus, that branch of the Bolles family was providentially preserved and continued, through an only surviving son.

Stoddard was tried and executed for his crime.

Deacon John Bolles of Hartford, one of the most godly men who ever lived, was a descendant of the above. He was cotemporary with, and a neighbor of my father, and used to call him "Cousin Bowles."

At what time the first Bowles emigrated to America, does not yet appear, nor from what family or town in England he came. John Bowles of Roxbury, and Thomas Bolles of Wells, Maine, may have been related, but there is no evidence of it. Their descendants have been distinct, except an occasional intermarriage. From the date of Thomas Bolles's birth, in England, he must have come to this country more than twenty years after John Bowles, of Roxbury.

The first John Bowles in America was admitted to the Church in Roxbury, with Dorothy his wife, in 1640. How long he had lived in Roxbury previous to this, or when he arrived, does not appear. He probably landed in Boston, and had not been long in Roxbury, before he joined the Church. He was one of the founders of the Free School in Roxbury. He was a member of the Artillery Company in 1645. His wife, Dorothy, died in November, 1649. His second wife, Elizabeth Heath, died in 1665.

His children were—

Elizabeth, born June 2, 1651,

Isaac, born April, 1652,

John, “ June, 1653,

Mary, “ April, 1655.

John Bowles, of the second generation, was baptized by the Apostle Elliot, June 27, 1653, graduated at Harvard in 1671, a classmate of Chief Justice Sewall. He was married Nov. 16, 1681, by the venerable Elliot, to his grand-child, Sarah Elliot. The Apostle records that brother Bowles died August 7, 1691, having been a “ Ruling Elder” in the Church about five years. He was elected a Representative to the General Court in 1689—Speaker of the House in 1690, and died in Roxbury in 1691, aged 38 years.

His son, John Bowles, of the third generation, was born March, 1685. He was twice married, first to Lydia Checkley of Boston, by whom he had five children. His second wife was a sister of Mr. White, Treasurer of Harvard College, and Clerk of the House of Representatives. By her he left one son, John. His only daughter, Mary, married Benjamin Lynde, Jr., Esq., of Salem, afterwards (as was his father before him) Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Of Major Bowles's death and character, we learn from the following obituary notice:—

From the Boston News Letter, April 8, 1737.

“Died, at Roxbury, on Monday, the 28th of March, of an inveterate jaundice, with other chronical distempers, John Bowles, Esq.,

aged 52. He was interred on the Saturday following, with great respect and many tears. He was descended from worthy, pious ancestors, by his father. His mother was grand-child of the famous Apostle Elliot. His father died when he was very young; but happily committed his son to the care of Rev. Mr. Walter of Roxbury. After his education at Harvard College, whence he graduated in 1703, he settled in his own town; and was very early called into the management of its prudential affairs, which duties he discharged with great faithfulness to the last. In the Militia, he was some years Major of the regiment at Roxbury. In the year 1728 he was chosen a Representative of the town of Roxbury, and every year successively, till his death. He was always known to have the public good at heart, and endeavored to the utmost in his power to promote what he thought the true interest of his country; and, in his last hours, he had the comfort of having exerted himself to keep a good conscience, more particularly with respect to the great trust reposed on him, as a member of the General Court. He was one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for Suffolk, and behaved himself in that capacity with prudence and caution. He was truly one of those which the Psalmist lamented the death of as a public loss:—Ps. 12, 1. 'Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail among the children of men.' ”

Among his children were—

Samuel,	born	March,	1713,
William,	“	“	1715,
Joshua,	“	“	1722.

Joshua Bowles, the last named, being of the fourth generation, died in Boston, August 30, 1794, aged 72. Mary Hart, his wife, died January 16, 1780, aged 52. Capt. Ralph Hart, her father, died in Boston in 1776, aged 77. Joshua Bowles owned and occupied a house now standing in Charter street, near the head of Salem street, in Boston. He was a carver of furniture, a kind of work very fashionable at the time. He never had much property. Indeed, I do not think our ancestors were ever distinguished for the acquisition of wealth. But he has been represented to me as a very benevolent, pious man. An old lady, who knew him well, in her youth, told me that when walking behind him in the street, she had heard him praying audibly. Like some other good men of his day, he had a queer way of intermingling religious and secular thoughts

and words. My father told me that in a letter to him, he once wrote, "Dear Samuel, strive to live in the fear of God, and write me word how the boat comes on,"—(a pleasure or sail-boat, kept to let.)

His children were—

Joshua, born October 19, 1754, died June 3, 1772.

Sarah, born February 3, 1756, Mrs. Phipps of Charlestown.

Ralph Hart, born March 10, 1757, died at Machias, Oct. 1803.

John, born March 2, 1759, died in Hartford, Sept. 24, 1808.

Mary, born September 21, 1760, Mrs. Edes of Boston.

Samuel, born Aug. 4, 1762, died in Hartford, March 31, 1813.

Lydia, born Sept. 15, 1764, Mrs. Joseph Austin, Boston.

William, born Nov. 19, 1766, died at sea.

Ralph Hart married the daughter of Rev. Josiah Crocker of Taunton. He was in the Army of the American Revolution, during the War; served as Adjutant; was in the battle of Monmouth, in Col. Vose's regiment; and at the close of the War, held a Captain's commission. He was an active and capable field officer, as his orderly books show. After the war, he settled in Machias, Maine, where he died. He held the offices of Postmaster and Justice of the Peace, for many years. His widow died at the house of her son Stephen, in Roxbury, July 10, 1847, aged 82.

His children, so far as I knew them, were—

Lucius Quintius Cincinnatus, died in Roxbury.

Stephen J., died in Roxbury.

Leonard C., bookseller of Boston, lives in Roxbury.

Mary, (Mrs. Burrall) died in Brooklyn, N. Y.

John, the third son, who died in Hartford, left several children; of whom Mrs. Deidama Canfield of Hartford, and Joseph A. Bowles of Newark, N. J. survive. He served three years in the army of the Revolution, and was honorably discharged as a sergeant in May, 1780. His wife Deidama, a pious, worthy woman, died at the house of her son in Newark, N. J., on the 19th of January, 1846, in the 87th year of her age.

Samuel, (my father) like all his brothers, was brought up in Boston, except perhaps a short time during the siege of that city by the British troops. At the time of the Declaration of Independence, he was but fourteen years old. His education was meagre, as might

be supposed, in such times. All the school advantages of which I ever heard him speak, he obtained of "Master Tileston," the celebrated North End schoolmaster. As illustrative of Master Tileston's manners and discipline, I relate two facts, as I heard them when a boy. My father, at one time during his attendance at this school, assisted a baker in selling his bread in the morning. This obliged him to rise very early and oftentimes cut off his time for breakfast, if he got to school in season. In such an emergency, he would put a biscuit in his pocket, to eat when he had opportunity. One morning, in this condition, he entered school late, and endeavored to reach his seat quietly and unobserved. But Master Tileston saw him and sarcastically called the attention of the school to him, by saying, "see that boy skulking to his seat, with a biscuit sticking out of his pocket." When Master T. looked over a boy's writing-book, and found a blot, he would say, "Look here, you slovenly rascal," with a smart rap on the side of the head that made the ear tingle.

My father learnt the trade of pewterer, in Boston. In May, 1785, when about 22 years old, he married Sarah Harris, a native of Boston, and a descendant of John Harris, who lived in Charlestown, as early as 1658. Both my parents were brought up under the religious teachings and influences of the "Old South." The operations and effects of the War, having spoilt my father's business in Boston, he left, and after a short stay in Providence, came to Hartford, about the year 1789, with two young children. His brother John had then been living some time in Hartford, engaged in the baking business. My father obtained employment at his trade. In going out of Hartford, on a trading trip, his leg was fractured, which crippled him for life. After becoming able to walk, he was unable to pursue his business as before, and opened a grocery store in North Main street, then called Burr street. He lived in the same house, which stood on a spot now covered by brick buildings, called "Phelp's Block." In this small business he accumulated six or eight hundred dollars in a few years, besides supporting an increasing family. He afterwards owned and occupied a store, corner of North Main and Trumbull streets, the store bounded west by Trumbull street. He also bought a dwelling-house about 40 rods north, on the opposite side of Main street. We lived there about six years, till nearly a year after his death, which occurred on the 31st of March, 1813. His disease was an inflammation of the lungs,

which continued several weeks. He was conscious to the last, and gave his family an affectionate farewell. He was a man of good sense, quick wit, tender feelings, and strict honesty. Though not a member of any Church, he was a faithful and liberal member of the Baptist society, and governed by a sense of religious duty, in bringing up his family. He contributed freely, according to his means, to the support of religious worship, and of benevolent objects. His Family Bible (now in my possession) he purchased in 1804 with a barrel of flour, the price of which was then much more than it is now.

His children were—

Samuel, born February 17, 1786, died Sept. 1, 1787.

Ralph Hart, born Jan. 21, 1787, died in Hartford, July 2, 1828.

Samuel, " Jan. 26, 1788, died Sept. 1, 1789.

John, " June 12, 1789, lives in Palmer, Mass.

Sarah Harris, " March 27, 1792, died October 22, 1810.

Samuel, " Sept. 31, 1793, died August 10, 1794.

Josiah Harris, " Aug. 10, 1796, died Oct. 12, 1797.

Samuel, " June 8, 1797, lives in Springfield.

Adelia S., " Dec. 13, 1800, died August, 13, 1851.

" Married John Harris, Nov. 20, 1821.

" " Asa Darrow, about the year 1838.

William, the youngest of the family, was a sail-maker by trade. In the first expedition from Boston, for the North-west Coast and the China trade, he shipped as a sail-maker, and was gone eight years. He returned as first mate of the ship. He afterwards made several successful similar voyages, as master, and acquired a handsome property. These voyages, however, were of much shorter duration than the first. His last voyage was in the new ship *William and Mary*. At a certain place on the N. W. Coast, Capt. Salter of the ship *Boston*, with his crew, were massacred by the Natives, and the ship set on fire, in revenge upon Capt. Salter, for some affront he had given them. Only one man was saved, John R. Jewett, a blacksmith, whose life was preserved by the Indians, as he believed, on account of his mechanical skill. Jewett afterwards published a book about his adventures. Capt. Bowles had left the harbor, and was going out to sea. Seeing the ship *Boston* on fire he put back to render assistance. While standing on his quarter-deck, he received a poisoned arrow in the back of his neck. He died soon after, and

had an ocean grave. Whether he died from the effects of the arrow, or of his previous illness, (said to be consumption,) is uncertain. He left a widow and two children, William and Mary. William, (a worthy, high-minded man,) died in Cincinnati of the cholera, in the year 1835. His sister Mary married Dr. Flagg, of that city, and is now a widow.

The line of succession, from our first ancestor at Roxbury, may be thus briefly stated:—

Elder John Bowles and Elizabeth Heath.

Elder John Bowles and Sarah Elliot.

Major John Bowles and Lydia Checkley.

Joshua Bowles and Mary Hart.

Samuel Bowles and Sarah Harris, died in Hartford.

Samuel Bowles and Huldah Deming.

I trust no one of the *Bolles* or *Bowles* families will feel offended because they may not be properly noticed in this sketch; as I have prepared it simply to gratify myself and children, and have been at no special pains to obtain facts touching other branches. Much of what I have put down respecting other branches, is from memory. The facts concerning our first ancestors, which I have gathered at some pains and expense, I trust will be satisfactory to all. If any thing is stated inaccurately, I should be pleased to be corrected.

